

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SANA 04478 131249Z
ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
DODE-00 SS-15 NSC-05 MCE-00 AID-05 ACDA-12 /063 W
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R 130950Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5926
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
CHUSMTM DHAHRAN
USMTM RIYADH
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE/ECJ4/7-SA
SECDEF WASHDC

S E C R E T SANA 4478

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, YE
SUBJECT: ARMS FOR YEMEN

BEGIN SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER REPORTS HE TOLD BY YAR
PRESIDENT THAT "POSITIVE DECISION" ON ARMS WILL BE FORTH-
COMING SOON. END SUMMARY.

1. IN 12 SEPTEMBER INTERVIEW, YAR PRIME MINISTER DR. RPT
DR. ABD AL-AZIZ ABD AL-GHANI--HE IS VERY PLEASED WITH
HIS COLORADO DEGREE AND HIS TRIP TO US--TOLD CHARGE
RANSOM AND DCM DESIGNATE GNEHM THAT HE HAD CONVEYED TO
PRESIDENT SALIH, IN GREAT DETAIL, RESULTS OF TALKS IN WASH-
INGTON. ABD AL-GHAN SAID HE WAS CAREFUL TO EXPRESS, AS
EVERYONE HAD MADE CLEAR TO HIM IN WASHINGTON, CONCERN AND
INTEREST OF USG IN HELPING YEMEN FACE THREAT AND, IN
PARTICULAR OUR DESIRE TO BEGIN ARMS DELIVERIES.

2. PRIME MINISTER SAID PRESIDENT WAS PLEASED, PARTI-
CULARLY WITH WHAT PRIME MINISTER DESCRIBED AS "VERY EXACT
AND CLEAR ASSURANCES" OF USG, EXPRESSED BY NATIONAL
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SECURITY ADVISOR BREZHINSKI, TO "HELP YEMEN IN EVENT OF
ATTACK BY ANOTHER GREAT POWER."

3. CHARGE PRESSED PM ON THIS POINT BUT HE STUCK TO
HIS FORMULATION. (COMMENT: WE SURMISE THAT THIS STATE-
MENT PROBABLY REFLECTS RECORD OF CONVERSATION IN PARA 20
OF STATE 222174.) LATER IN CONVERSATION CHARGE ASKED

WHICH MESSAGE HAD PRESIDENT BEEN REFERRING TO WHEN HE EXPRESSED HAPPINESS THROUGH MUTAWAKKIL IN WASHINGTON WITH PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE. PRIME MINISTER WASN'T SURE; HE THOUGH IT WAS PROBABLY MY LETTER OF 31 AUGUST. HE DIDN'T THINK IT WAS EARLIER PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE, SENT AT TIME OF SALIH'S ELECTION AND HE DIDN'T THINK IT WAS PRESIDENT'S 'ID MESSAGE.

4. PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT PRESIDENT PREFERS DEAL WITH ARMS QUESTION ONLY WITH FEW COLLEAGUES IN MILITARY, AND EXCEPT FOR BRIEFINGS THAT CHARGE PROVIDED HIM HE NOT PRIVY TO DETAILS. CHARGE URGED HIM NEVERTHELESS TO PRESS PRESIDENT TO RESPOND FAVORABLY TO EMBASSY LETTER OF 31 SEPTEMBER, MAKING IT CLEAR THAT WITH PASSING OF TIME IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE, IN OUR VIEW, TO ANYTHING HERE BY 26 SEPTEMBER. CHARGE SAID FELT THERE NO OTHER WAY TO PROCEED EXCEPT THROUGH STAGES, IN WHICH PLANNING, TRAINING, SUPPORT AND DISCUSSIONS OF TURN-OVER AND USE MADE IT POSSIBLE, AT EVERY STEP, TO BE SURE THAT EQUIPMENT COULD BE USED EFFECTIVELY. PRIME MINISTER LISTENED CAREFULLY, INDICATED AGREEMENT AND UNDERSTANDING, BUT MADE NO COMMITMENT TO RAISE ISSUE WITH PRESIDENT.

5. CHARGE CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT WE HAD MILITARY LIST OF YARG UNDER CONSIDERATION AND WHEN FIRST PHASE GOT GOING DISCUSSION WOULD BE ONGOING ABOUT FURTHER EQUIPMENT
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DELIVERIES. PM NOTED THAT YARG AWAITING US RESPONSE. CHARGE RESPONDED THAT WITH SUCCESS OF PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON, AND WARMTH OF PRESIDENT SALIH'S RECEPTION TO CONGRESSMENT, WAY SHOULD BE FOUND TO CUT THROUGH PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS AND BEGIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO STRENGTHEN YEMEN'S DEFENSES AGAINST ATTACK WHICH PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF HAD JUST SAID WAS INEVITABLE AND PERHAPS IMMINENT. PRIME MINISTER THEN SAID PRESIDENT HAD TOLD HIM TWICE SINCE RETURN FROM US ON SEPTEMBER 1 THAT "FAVORABLE REPLY" OF YAR WAS GOING TO BE FORTHCOMING SOON.

COMMENT: WE THINK THAT THE MESSAGE WHICH SO PLEASED PRESIDENT SALIH IS THE "ASSURANCE" WHICH MR. BREZHNEV PASSED ON TO PRIME MINISTER ABD AL-GHANI. ABD AL-GHANI, WHEN PRESSED, INSISTED A BIT FORCEFULLY--WHICH IS UNUSUAL FOR HIM--THAT THERE WAS NO MISTAKE ABOUT WHAT HAD BEEN SAID. WE ARE STRUCK BY FACT THAT, AS STATED BY PM, "ASSURANCE" COMES CLOSE TO SOUNDING LIKE A DEFENSE COMMITMENT, WHICH MAY BE HOW PRESIDENT HAS INTERPRETED IT. IN ANY CASE, THAT IS CLEARLY, IN MY MIND, HOW PRESIDENT, WHO IS DEAF TO NUANCE, WOULD HAVE INTER-

PRETED PARA 20 OF STATE 122174. WITH NEED TO GET
FAVORABLE RESPONSE FROM YAR ON ARMS IMPACT PACKAGE, I
SUGGEST THAT WE LEAVE ANY CLARIFICATIONS TO LATER TIME,
TO BE TAKEN UP IN CONTEXT OF DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIP OF
AMBASSADOR LANE WITH PRESIDENT AND, HOPEFULLY, IN
CONTEXT OF DEVELOPING ARMS SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP.
RANSOM

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition History: n/a
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TAGS: MASS, YE
To: STATE
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